

II. ATOMIC CITY

Atomic City is located approximately 32 miles from Blackfoot and 7 miles from Central Facilities at the INEEL. The town site is situated 2 miles South off highway 26. The town consists of 32 full-time residents and a varying number of temporary or transitory residents. There is one farm home along with a number of out buildings. There are a number of abandoned structures and weedy lots within the city limits.

The town site is largely surrounded by a combination of sagebrush and prairie grass on the North and West. The sagebrush lines both sides of the road that leads to the town from the highway from the North. Fairly heavy fuels also line the road that passes through the town on a more-or-less East-to-West direction. To the South is farmland that has been grazed or farmed to the point that there is little or no fuel to pose a fire hazard.

Perhaps the most dangerous situation exists on the immediate West of the town. Here, fuels grow unrestricted right up to the edge of the last street. Four (?) homes and various structures lie along this street and are within easy distance of a blowing wild fire.

The area around Atomic City has been involved in a number of wild land fires in recent past years. On at least one occasion, residents were advised to evacuate to avoid smoke inhalation. While fires have not entered the city, a raging fire approaching from the West or the North could possibly ignite several homes.

Atomic City will be serviced by other Fire Districts, such as Blackfoot Fire District and the INEEL if deemed necessary.

A. MITIGATION ACTIONS

A number of mitigation actions have already begun in Atomic City. The City Mayor and the BLM have initiated actions that will greatly assist the town to survive future fires. Among those are: 1) the acquisition of fire trucks and equipment, and the formation of a volunteer fire department; 2) a program of disking and ground work along the entry road into the city; 3) the acquisition of an emergency generator for back-up power in the event of a power outage. A significant development is the announcement by the BLM of their intention to construct a regional fire fighting facility in the town. This facility will house fire-fighting men and equipment, and equally important capability to manage and direct fire-fighting efforts.

1. A program of fire-wise education will be conducted to alert homeowners to the risks they face and actions they can take to reduce their own vulnerability.

2. A building needs to be constructed to house their fire trucks and personal equipment. At present, the trucks are parked outside and personal gear is stored at each volunteer's home. This makes it very difficult to mobilize quickly and is detrimental to the equipment.
3. The threatening areas where fuel is a hazard must be addressed. Property owners will be asked for their cooperation, and compensated, to allow mitigation efforts to be taken on their land. Suggested efforts include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Plowing or disking a safety zone;
 - ii. A grazing program to consume the fuels;
 - iii. Seeding low-growing fire-resistant grasses in areas that have already been, or will be, disturbed; and,
 - iv. Periodically mowing fuels to maintain a 3" to 5" height of close-growing fuels.
4. A secondary well is needed as a backup to the single well now existing in the town. If the well should fail during a fire, there is no recourse to obtain water for fire fighting. During past fires, the power lines have burned down causing a power outage in the town.
5. Also needed is a water main running the length of the town with hydrants spaced each block to provide access to water during a fire fight.